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The Columbia Coast Mission



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The Columbia Coast Mission

INTRODUCTION

The facts connected with the Columbia Coast Mission are few and simple.



THE CAPTAIN

In the summer of 1904 the Rev. John Antle, Incumbent of Holy Trinity, Vancouver, was commissioned by the Bishops

of Columbia and New Westminster to explore the islands and bays of the Gulf of Georgia, 100 to 200 miles north of Vancouver, with a view to establishing a mission in those regions. This he did in a sailing boat and, to everyone's surprise, discovered some 3,000 men, scattered in logging and mining camps, in numbers ranging from 20 to 200, among whom no regular religious service of any sort had ever been held. Here was a clear call to the Church. Mr. Antle at once determined to resign his charge and undertake this mission.

He saw at a glance that the work could only be done by means of a boat and, being a practical seaman, he designed the boat and became its skipper. The boat must be large and staunch enough to weather those rough Northern seas. It must have gasoline power with auxiliary sail. It must have a main cabin fitted out for religious services. It must have a library for the distribution of useful literature and a dispensary for the serving out of medicine. And above all things it must have a hospital cot and a doctor for the temporary treatment of men suffering from disease or accident; and it must be within easy reach of a hospital where the sick can find suitable accommodation and skilful treatment.

The estimated cost of such a boat was \$4,000. Of this Mr. Antle raised \$1,000 in Victoria, \$1,000 in Vancouver; and he obtained from the Board of Management of M.S.C.C., a grant of \$2,000, besides \$500 towards the up-keep of the boat for the first year.

The Woman's Auxiliary, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and private individuals provided the organ, the library, the dispensary, and all the necessary equipment; and the Hastings Mills Co. undertook to build the Hospital. The boat was launched in April, 1905, and the Hospital opened in July, with suitable religious ceremonies in each case. The boat was named the Columbia. Its captain is Rev. John Antle. Its surgeon, Dr. W. A. B. Hutton, is a graduate of Manitoba University, an expert chemist, has been House Surgeon in the Winnipeg General Hospital, and was for two years in charge of the Garfield Memorial Hospital, Washington, D.C. The Hospital at Rock Bay is operated jointly by the Columbia Coast Mission and the Victorian Order

of Nurses, and is under the charge of Miss Sutherland, as head nurse, and Miss Franklin, as assistant nurse. Earnest religious services are held at central points, in the camp if weather and circumstances permit, if not, in the main cabin of the ship. Hundreds of books and periodicals are in constant circulation. Cases of illness and accident are continually being treated and many lives are being saved. A real ministry of help has been established, physical, intellectual and spiritual, and much good has been accomplished both for time and for eternity.



THE SURGEON

The Columbia is 60 feet long, 14 feet wide, and draws $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water, is propelled by gasolene with auxiliary sail, has a well fitted bath room, and the captain's and the doctor's cabins are roomy and comfortable.

The book cases have accommodation for 1,000 volumes.

The Hospital was erected at a cost of \$3,000. At the end of eight months, Dec. 31, 1905, 1,250 cases had been treated.

The following account is taken from the Superintendent's first annual report :

Medical and surgical work on the ship and in the Hospital for eight months ending Dec. 31st, 1905 :

First case treated on board "Columbia," May 14th, 1905.

Hospital open for work July 5th, 1905.

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

Prescriptions dispensed—

Hospital.....	228
Mission Ship.....	334
Total.....	562

Operations performed—

Hospital.....	33
Mission Ship.....	18
Total.....	51

Total number of days in Hospital..... 856

Average number of days in hospital for each patient..... 13.8

Surgical Cases treated in hospital..... 45

Medical..... 14

Gynaecological..... 3

Total number of patients treated in hospital. 62

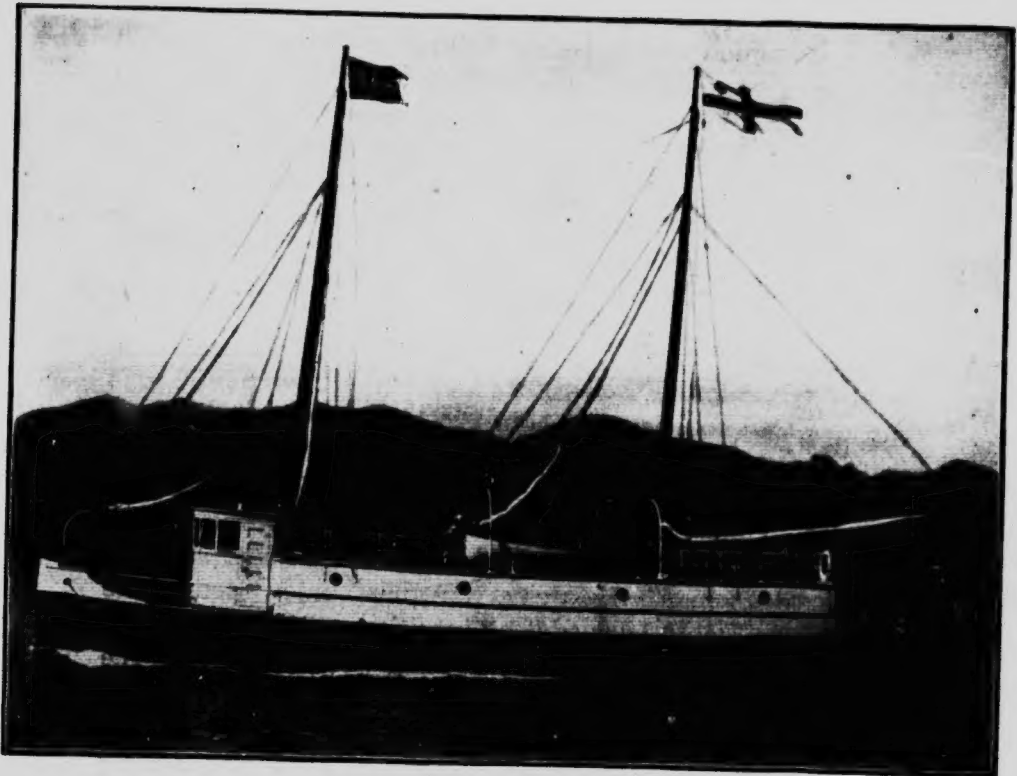
Total number of cases treated, including medical and surgical cases, dressing and teeth extractions..... 1250

The cost of the Mission is about \$500 a month, or \$6,000 a year, and is borne chiefly by the men themselves, who for \$10.00 per annum procure tickets that entitle them to all the benefits of the Mission. In the course of 12 months the enterprise has become self-supporting and has only cost the Missionary Society for maintenance the modest sum of \$700.

These plain facts shed a flood of light on the whole of our Missionary work.

I. The Columbia Coast Mission in the first place illustrates the extraordinary needs of the Church in Canada to-day. Scattered over a wide area—five to ten thousand square miles but easily accessible by sea, are 3,000 men—not women and children be it remembered, but men—engaged in a most important national industry, and left for years without any religious service whatsoever. And this is by no means a solitary case. In New Ontario, in the Diocese of Algoma, are thirty townships, one of which alone, Haileybury, contains a population of 2,500 souls, that enjoy the services of

only one or two clergymen. In the Diocese of Qu'Appelle and of Calgary, into which immigrants are pouring by scores of thousands annually, there are thousands of settlers hopelessly beyond the regular ministrations of the Church. In the Diocese of Saskatchewan are a score of districts from 30 to 50 miles in length and 10 to 30 miles in width



THE "COLUMBIA"

without a resident clergyman. From every part of that vast region comes the cry of need, of spiritual destitution, from our fellowmen, our fellow citizens, our fellow churchmen—an earnest cry that, in its concentrated force, should prove irresistible.

II. The Columbia Coast Mission illustrates, on the other hand, the latent resources of the Church, to supply that need.

No one doubts that there is money enough in the pockets of our people to supply the financial necessities of our Mission Field. What is perhaps less well known is the wealth of men at our disposal if we only knew where to find them and how to use them.

The magnitude of the opportunities that open out before us is predisposing the minds of many and appealing irresistibly to their higher religious and moral instincts. Over the whole Dominion men in secular callings are being led by God to offer themselves for the work of the ministry. And practical steps are being taken to meet that emergency. The Bishop of Qu'Appelle is forming a hostel to give the necessary religious training to such men and is drafting them into the Sacred Ministry. For a like purpose the Bishop of New Westminster is establishing a theological school at Vancouver.

And among the Clergy are "Mute inglorious Miltons," who have not yet found their right place in the Church, and who are qualified to seize and hold the high places of the field. Three years ago in a small suburb of Vancouver, struggling amid the initial difficulties of pioneer work, going through the agony of building church and parsonage and providing for current expenses with utterly inadequate means, was just such a young man. He was a Newfoundlander, bred to the sea, able to man a boat as if by intuition, with the maritime instincts of the old Vikings slumbering within him, with the broad Pacific Ocean spread at his feet and with the countless bays and islands of the Gulf of Georgia, harbouring their little settlements of neglected loggers and miners, making their mute appeal to his Missionary zeal. A cruise among these islands and bays suddenly reveals his true mission to him. Like a true man he soon gathers round him a host of helpers and practically unlimited resources—a doctor, a Victorian Order of nurses, two great cities, two Dioceses and a Missionary Society—and leads the Church out, in a perfectly unsuspected quarter, into a field of service and success that bids fair to become one of the most romantic Missionary ventures of the age.

III. The Columbia Coast Mission also illustrates the value of the right man in the right place. This is the solution of all our missionary problems. The Rev. John Antle, Incumbent of Holy Trinity, Vancouver, B.C., in grappling with the question of how to deal with wild western boys, bethinks him of the sea, as a training ground, of the boat, the oar, the sail, forms an aquatic Boys' Brigade, is led into wider and deeper



THE HOSPITAL.

waters, explores a cluster of islands in the Gulf, discovers a number of mining and logging camps, with an aggregate of 3,000 workmen, who are without the pale of parochial and diocesan activity, and opens up a new world to the Missionary enterprise of the Church. With the intuition of genius the whole plan of operations flashes upon him. He must have a boat equipped with a chapel, a hospital cot, a dispensary, a library, and within easy reach of a hospital.

Here was a large order needing a very large sum of money for its execution. But the true man rides buoyantly over all waves of difficulty. Full of his subject the Rev. J. Antle overcomes all hesitation and opposition in the Dioceses of Columbia and New Westminster; raises \$1,000 in each of the cities of Vancouver and Victoria; induces the millmen of the Pacific waters to build the hospital; suddenly appears in the city of Montreal during a session of the Board of Management; persuades the members of the Board to give him a grant of \$2,000 for the purchase of his boat; the boat is built, launched, paid for in a few months; he soon has his Victorian nurses ensconced in their hospital at Rock Bay with their wards full of patients; brings a real live doctor with him into the little settlements; wins the confidence of the most intractable men in the wild and woolly West; and within 18 months after the inception of the scheme and 12 months after the launching of the boat he has placed the whole large scheme, not only in working order, but on a self supporting basis, the money derived from the men being sufficient to cover all the expenses of the enterprise. And what is more, to meet the requirements of the growing work great improvements must be made to the "Columbia"; an assistant surgeon must be secured; the hospital must be doubled in capacity during the present year; and soon ordained help will be an absolute necessity. Such is the value of the right man in the right place.

IV. The Columbia Coast Mission also illustrates the value of being first in the field. Japan, in the war with Russia, was first to strike a stunning blow and so won a moral as well as a material advantage, from which she could not subsequently be dislodged. The Church in the Mission Field has often suffered loss, not only from lack of men and means, but also from lack of courage, initiative and enterprise. She has too often allowed her energetic neighbours to be first in the field, to stake out their claims, to begin their services, to build their churches, to get subscriptions from her members, to gather her children into their Sunday Schools and her singers into their choirs, and secure a firm hold on the whole community before she had awaked to the necessity of doing some-

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

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thing. And when at the eleventh hour she appeared on the scene she naturally stood at very great disadvantage and could only secure the minimum of results with the maximum of effort and sacrifice. This unhappy experience should teach us at this time not to stint our leaders and representatives in the West, but rather to keep them well supplied with



THE CAMP.

men and means; and then we may rest assured that the Church will give a good account of herself. The Columbia Coast Mission by courageous action at the right moment, has secured a practical monopoly of a most interesting missionary field, and bids fair to reproduce on the Pacific, among the loggers and miners of the Gulf of Georgia, the beneficent and

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

levating influence wielded by Dr. Grenfell on the Atlantic, among the "Liveyeres" of the Labrador Coast.

V. The Columbia Coast Mission also illustrates the variety of interests served by Missionary work at the present day. The social conditions of modern life enable us to realize more fully than at any previous time that the Church should be a social and humanitarian influence as well as a spiritual power; just as the Lord Himself cared for the bodies as well as the souls of men. It often happens that men are conciliated, their prejudices removed, their confidence won and an entrance secured for the message of the Gospel into their hearts by a judicious use of outward means.

"The Columbia" is like a Royal Mail Steamer that brings to isolated communities and lonely lives tidings from the outer world. Its books and magazines are a source of unspeakable pleasure and profit to men who are deprived of nearly all the advantages of home and social life. A Royal Mail Steamer, it is also a Marine Ambulance to convey the sick and wounded to the shelter of the hospital and the care of the nurse. Men who are leading an outdoor life in rough, uncultivated places, working powerful machinery and handling immense timbers, are peculiarly exposed to accidents and dangers. When sick or wounded their recovery often depends on immediate care and attention. With the slow and imperfect means of transportation at their disposal many have been condemned to die before they could reach the doctor, the nurse or the hospital. The Columbia moves continually in and out of the islands and bays; is among the first to hear of a case of accident or illness; is prepared to give the patient immediate treatment on board, in a comfortable bed and at the hands of a skilful doctor; and is free to convey him at once to the hospital where he will receive the most gentle and loving care.

Must not a Gospel that brings such ministrations to the bodily needs of men find a ready entrance into their hearts. What wonder if those men, whose exterior is sometimes rough and uncouth, but whose hearts are full of warm and generous impulses, drink in with eagerness the message of the love of God and the redemption of Christ when they see redeeming

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

love so clearly displayed before their very eyes, as they s around the camp fire, under the stars of heaven, or as the crowd into the main cabin of the boat, rocked in the cradle of the deep.

VI. Moreover the Columbia Coast Mission is making an original contribution to the history of Missions. It is dealing in a special manner with a peculiar type of men, the miners and loggers of the Pacific Coast. Many of them are men who have a history, most of them are men who have a passion for



THE BAY.

a free, outdoor life, for the fresh air of heaven, for the sunlight, the woods, the mountains, the sea. There must be a strong element of poetry in some of those men. Their energies are expended in physical exercise resulting in robust physical health. They are generous, friendly, warm-hearted men. Impulsive, they often scatter their hard-earned wages with a lavish hand and, when they visit the centres of civilization, they easily fall a prey to the landsharks that infest the slums of great cities and squander the earnings of six months in as many days. Unused to the ways of cities they plunge head-

long into its pleasures and oftentimes its dissipations. But, in the camp, they are cheerful, industrious, reliable, loyal to their craft and to their fellow craftsmen, abhorring meanness with a perfect hatred, and loving with a whole heart what, according to their standards is manly, generous and noble. Far removed from the temptations of city life, living in isolation and in daily contact with the stern realities of nature and of life, their hearts are singularly open to the influences of the Missionary and of the Gospel.

Is not this a splendid field of labour? Are not such rough and wayward but generous and manly fellows the very men over whom Christ yearns and for whom the Church should spend and be spent? Here is no opportunity to build great cathedrals, to gather together immense congregations, to render elaborate and ornate services; but in the Sanctuary of God's own Temple of Nature, amid the most glorious mountains, seas, and forests of the world, there is an unrivalled opportunity of cultivating the divine feelings of reverence, awe, the fear of God, the love of man and the hatred of evil, which are the main elements, not only of true religion, but of all high and noble life. Here is an unrivalled opportunity of building living stones into the spiritual temple of the living and true God.

VII. And the Columbia Coast Mission illustrates the singular interest that attaches to our Missionary work at the present time. That work is not always the dull and stupid thing it often seems to be at Missionary meetings. Here is a scene of unrivalled grandeur. Here are to be found in all their perfection, the glories and terrors of the sea, the grandeur and beauty of the mountains, the hush and solemnity of the forest. The mysterious powers of nature make us almost see and feel the presence of God.

Here, too, are the celebrated British Columbia fir trees that rise to an altitude of nearly 300 feet and measure 25 to 30 feet around the girth. These are the giants that go to form "the masts of some great admiral," and help to make England the mistress of the seas. These are the timbers that go to form the "British Columbia tooth picks," 2 feet square and 80 feet long; that form the beams and pillars of the

railway bridges and trestles that carry the transcontinental trains over the dizzy Canyons and precipices of the Rockies and the Selkirks; that provide telegraph and telephone poles, to disfigure our city streets and country roads; that form the beams and rafters of the snow sheds that are sometimes called to bear the weight of a glacier or a hillside; and that, planed and varnished, form the beautiful ceilings of our mansions



THE STEAM HORSE.

and churches. Here is one of our most valuable national industries, one of the main sources of our national wealth. Must not the men who are engaged in exploiting this industry for the common good have a special claim on the sympathetic interest of the Canadian Church ?

VIII. And this most interesting Mission forms part of one of the most interesting Mission fields in the world.

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION

The history of British Columbia is full of interest.

It connects the Pacific Province with several men of world-wide renown. Captain Cook spent the winter of 1778 on the west coast of Vancouver Island. Captain Vancouver in 1792 discovered Mount Baker and explored Puget Sound, Burrard Inlet, Howe Sound, and along a shore line of 1,800 miles, those countless inlets, bays and islands of which the Columbia Coast Mission forms so important a part. About the same time Alexander Mackenzie, having followed the Peace River into Great Slave Lake and the Mackenzie River into the Arctic Ocean, crossed the height of land from the head waters of the Peace River and, after incredible dangers and hair-breadth escapes, on July 20th, 1793, at Bella Coola, gazed upon the waters of the Pacific and, like Balboa—

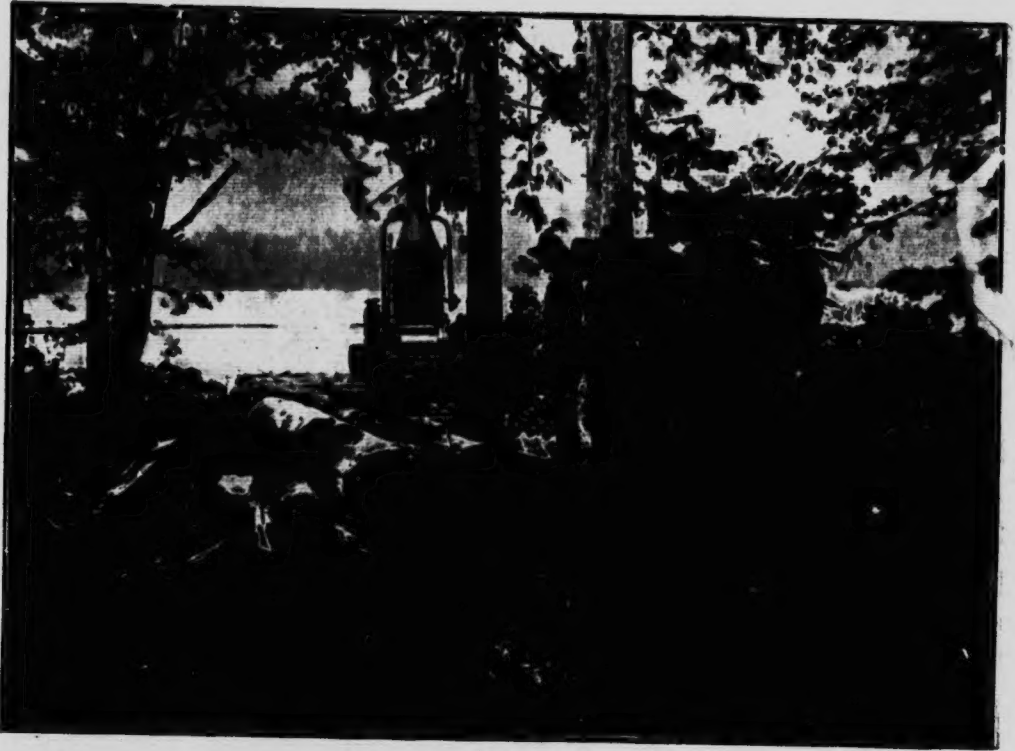
"all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise
Silent upon a peak in Darien;"

thus solving the vexed question of the North-west Passage; anticipating the location of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway; opening new regions to British commerce; extending the boundaries of geographical science and making British Columbia British territory.

It also connects the Pacific Province with events of far reaching importance; with the advent of "The Beaver," the first steamship to navigate the waters of the Pacific Ocean; with the Cariboo gold fever in 1859 and the Klondyke gold fever in 1898; with the building of the Cariboo road and the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway; with the rise of the great cities of Victoria and Vancouver; with the establishment of the Empress line of ocean steamers and the trade with the Orient, and with the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

The physical features of British Columbia, too, possess a beauty and grandeur all their own. The combination of sea and mountain, of light and shade, is here to be found unsurpassed on the surface of the globe. No more beautiful excursions can be imagined than those from Vancouver to Victoria, or from Vancouver to Fort Simpson, or down the Arrow Lakes, from Arrow Head to Robson; while Lake Louise and

THE COLUMBIA COAST MISSION



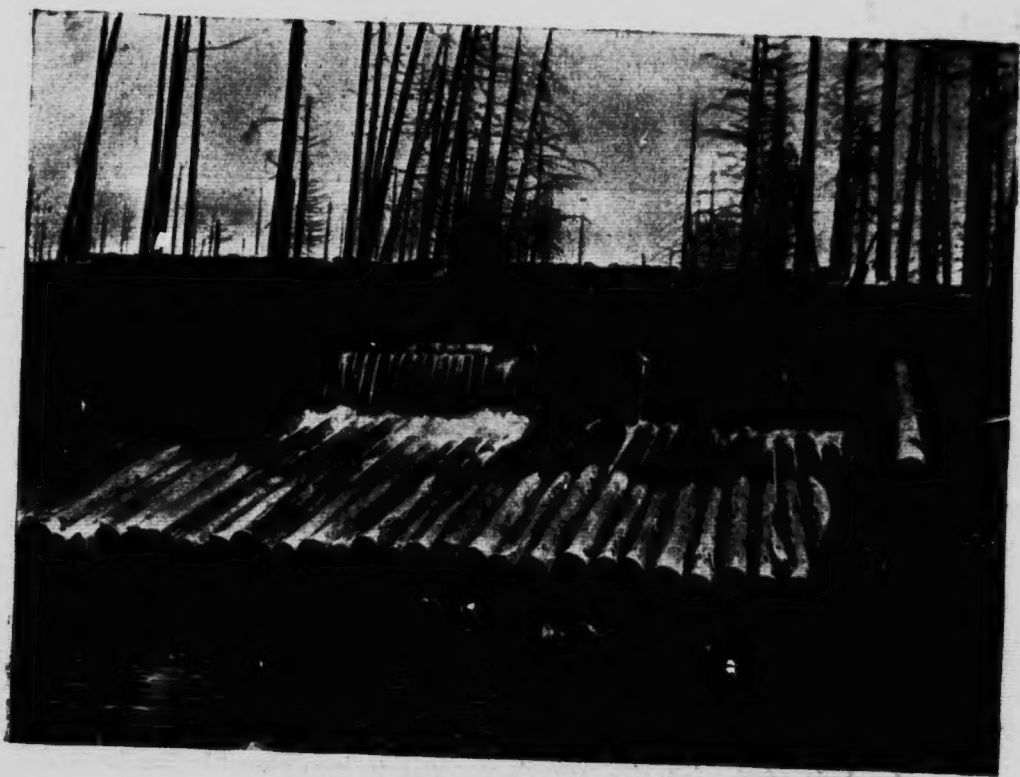
THE LOGGERS

Harrison Lake, the Albert Canyon and Rogers' Pass, Field, at the foot of Mount Stephen, and The Glacier, at the foot of Mount Sir Donald, are celebrated the world over as scenes of unrivalled grandeur and beauty.

The Gem of the Dominion, British Columbia has also been called its Treasure House. It is not only the largest province in Canada, but it also possesses the greatest variety of material resources. Its salmon fisheries at the mouth of the Frazer and of the Skeena, assure it an abundant yearly harvest from the sea. In Nanaimo and neighbourhood it possesses the richest coal beds on the Pacific Coast. A sea of mountains, its every hillside is covered with the finest timber in the world; while beneath the surface are rich mineral deposits. The dry belt of the interior affords pasture to innumerable herds of cattle and, by means of irrigation, the wilderness may be

made to blossom as the rose; while its capabilities for the production of the richest fruit and the most delicate flowers are beyond description. It would seem as though Nature had well nigh exhausted her resources when she formed the Province of British Columbia.

In the midst of such surroundings the Church has been called to do a work of unique interest and promise. Her work among the Indians at Lytton, connected with the names of Canon Good and Archdeacon Small, is romantic in the extreme; while her work among the Indians on the Northern Coast, at Metlakatla and elsewhere, connected with the names of William Duncan, Archdeacon Collison and Bishop Ridley, demonstrate the value of industrial Missions and the possibility of raising the aborigines, under favourable conditions.



THE DAM

to a high standard of development and civilization. The work among the Chinese at Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster, though pursued on a limited scale from lack of means, gives promise of satisfactory results. Not less hopeful is the work recently undertaken among the Japanese in Vancouver. The work in the mining camps of the interior, inseparably connected with the name of Father Pat, establishes a record in the rapid progress of missions towards self-help and self-support. And now, the work among the logging camps of the Pacific seaboard bids fair to become one of the most interesting and successful ventures of the Canadian Church in her vast Mission Field.

CONCLUSION

It may be fairly said in conclusion that our Missionary work would be more highly valued if it were more widely and better known. The hearts of our people are right. If they could only be brought to realize the need and the opportunity of the Church in our Canadian Field, not only \$66,000 or \$100,000, but all the men and all the money required would be freely contributed, in order to give our Church her rightful place among the religious forces that are engaged in shaping our young national life.

N B. The crosses on the accompanying map indicate the most important Camps visited by the "Columbia."

